Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard many

times over the course of yesterday and

today that this is the most important

vote that we will be asked to make in

our service in Congress. And I, as all

the rest of my colleagues, take it very seriously.

There is absolutely no doubt in my

mind that Saddam Hussein poses a

clear danger to the United States and

to the world and he must be dealt with quickly and decisively.

It is my hope that this resolution

will send a message to Saddam Hussein

that America means business, and in

return we will hear that U.N. inspectors

will be granted unfettered access

to any location deemed necessary with no exceptions.

I am pleased that the House leadership

listened to the concerns of Members

of both parties and developed a bipartisan

resolution that does not give

blanket approval to the President to

carry this battle across the globe without

consulting the American people,

Congress, or our allies. I am also

pleased that the President is continuing

to enlist the support of other

nations and that our action will not be unilateral.

The intent of Congress must be clear

that this is not an endorsement of a

foreign policy of preemptive strikes,

but instead a resolution authorizing

the President to take specific action

against a specific, demonstrated threat, Saddam Hussein.

Action against Saddam Hussein is

not a preemptive strike, it is a response

to Saddam Hussein’s blatant attacks,

ranging from firing on our aircraft

to the attempted assassination of

a former President. Foreign policy is

not an exact science. What we as Members

of Congress must do is weigh the

evidence and at some point we must

trust the President, Colin Powell,

Condoleezza Rice and others in the administration

to use this resolution as a tool, not just as a club.

After countless hours of briefings,

soul searching and prayer, I am confident

that this is our best course of action.

I ask our President that, as I

reach across this aisle to support him

on this resolution, I must express in

the strongest possible terms my disappointment

with the President’s handling of our economy. It is a disaster.

Layoffs are occurring as we speak. The

stock market is in a ditch, and the people

of the 9th Congressional District of

Texas and in this Nation are concerned

for their family’s future. There is a

growing concern that the administration

is asleep at the wheel on domestic issues.

This cannot continue. Just as I have reached across the aisle to support the

President on foreign policy, I am urging

the President to reach back across

this aisle to help me and my colleagues

address the economic problems facing

this Nation, because that, too, poses a

clear and present danger to the United

States of America. God bless America and all of the peoples of this world.